

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

would exact of himself that made him tell of his wrongdoings. The Communists had talked to him until they had given him new eyes with which to see his own crime. And they sat back and listened to him tell how he had erred. He was one with all the members there, regardless of race or color; his heart was theirs and their hearts were his; and when a man reaches that state of kinship with others, that degree of oneness, or when a trial has made him kin after he has been sundered from them by wrongdoing, then he must rise and say, out of a sense of the deepest morality in the world: 'I'm guilty. Forgive me.'

WRIGHT continues with the comment, "This, to me, was a spectacle of glory; and yet, because it had condemned me, because it was blind and ignorant, I felt that it was a spectacle of horror. The blindness of their limited lives—lives truncated and impoverished by the oppression they had suffered long before they had ever heard of Communism—made them think that I was with their enemies. American life had so corrupted their consciousness that they were unable to recognize their friends when they saw them. I knew that if they had held state power I should have been declared guilty of treason and my execution would have followed. And I knew that they felt, with all the strength of their black blindness, that they were right."

The foregoing portion of WRIGHT's article has been quoted because of the fact that it is believed significant in indicating that WRIGHT disapproves whole heartedly of the American way of life and living even though he has publicly at this time announced a breach with the Communist Party organization.

The concluding portion of his article tells of his transfer from the Federal Experiment Theater to the Federal Writers Project and leads up to the event of May Day 1936 when WRIGHT was refused the right to march in the parade and was physically rejected from the line of march by white Communists while other Communists, white and black, looked on without coming to his assistance. WRIGHT again refers to the blindness of these individuals and made the statement "I remembered the stories I had written, the stories in which I had assigned a role of honor and glory to the Communist Party, and I was glad that they were down in black and white, were finished. For I knew in my heart that I should never be able to write that way again, should never be able to feel with that simple sharpness about life, should never again express such passionate hope, should never again make so total a commitment of faith."

He then tells of his resolution to write and to do what he could by his writing to fight and to create a sense of the hunger for life that gnaws in us all, to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human."

In regard to the articles by WRIGHT it may be noted that these two

WRIGHT, R. 195

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

articles were originally the final portion of WRIGHT's new book, as yet unpublished, an autobiography entitled, "Black Boy".

CT [REDACTED] furnished this information concerning [REDACTED] b2 b7D

In view of the fact that the publicity and the information furnished by informants indicated WRIGHT's break with the Communist Party was an actual fact, it was felt that a discreet and careful interview with WRIGHT might be productive. However, it was ascertained on August 31, 1944 that WRIGHT is presently on his vacation and will not be back in New York City until about September 15, 1944.

P E N D I N G

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 196

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNDEVELOPED LEAD

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

AT BROOKLYN, NEW YORK- Will, after careful consideration, discreetly interview subject WRIGHT concerning his association with the Communist Party.

P. K. D. (Is hyphen?)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 197

49

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b1  
b2  
b7D

A confidential symbol was used for [REDACTED] to protect the identity of the informant because of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also because of the information he furnished.

b1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
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100-157464-12 enclosure

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XXXXXXWRIGHT, R  
199
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# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

NY FILE NO. **100-11674**

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>9/5/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>7/28; 8/21, 31; 9/2/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>INTERNAL SECURITY-C</b>

**b7c**

## KEY FIGURE

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject continues to reside at 89 Jefferts Place, Apt. C23, Brooklyn, 16, N.Y.

**b7E**

Subject author of two articles appearing in ATLANTIC MONTHLY for August and September, 1944, entitled, "I Tried To Be A Communist". Theme of articles seems to conclude with thought that subject broke with party because his friends in the Party, including those of his own race, were unable to recognize him as their friend. Articles do not appear to attack Communist Party as as revolutionary club, but because of failure of individuals in Party who properly recognize and deal with problems in society. Articles received wide-spread newspaper publication. Reports of informants and publicity indicates prominent Party members concerned over WRIGHT's articles. WRIGHT has authored new book "Black Boy", an autobiography which is not expected to appear until next year. ATLANTIC MONTHLY articles were originally final portion of this book.

AGENCY  
REC'D  
REP'T FORW.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE  
dated 7/8/44

**b7c**

## REFERENCES:

Bureau File 100-157464.  
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
at New York, New York.

## DETAILS:

Subject has been considered a Key Figure in Communist activities in the New York Field Division.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>E. C. Conroy</i>	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5-Bureau 1-Col. S.V. Constant-D. of I., 2SC 3-New York	100-157464-13
	RECORDED INDEXED
	CLASS. & EXT. BY <i>6-2</i> REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2 DATE OF REVIEW <i>8-25-81</i>
57 OCT 26 1944	SEP 8 1944

**b7c**

WRIGHT, P 200

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WRIGHT, R. 201

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WRIGHT, R. 202



# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

31478

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, N. Y.

FILE NO. 100-15433

REPORT MADE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 6/9/44	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 5/27, 29/44	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED] LS
TITLE ⑥ RICHARD WRIGHT			CHARACTER OF CASE S. - C SECURITY MATTER - C

## SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

[REDACTED] (C)

b1  
b7D

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP - 3 class  
DATE 10-21-81 [REDACTED]

- RUC -

AGENCY 100-111113  
REQ. REC'D 7-1-44  
REP'T FORW. 8-1-44  
BY [REDACTED]

b7C

## DETAILS:

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

[REDACTED]

b1  
b2  
b7C

A review of the indices of the Washington Field Office indicated that the person referred to [REDACTED] was undoubtedly a nationally prominent negro author by the name of RICHARD WRIGHT, who resides in New York City. It was found that numerous references to this RICHARD WRIGHT have been made in the Daily Worker over the course of years, and that information with regard to him has also been developed by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Honorable MARTIN DIES, Chairman.

[REDACTED]

b1  
b2  
b7C


APPROVED AND FORWARDED [Signature]	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	RECORDED & INDEXED 15 b7C
COPIES OF THIS REPORT DESTROYED 5 - Bureau 2 - New York AUG 28 1960 2 - Washington Field		100-157414-8 31 [REDACTED]	INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE
CLASS. EXT. BY SP-8 BTJ/LL		REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2	

WRIGHT  
203

WFO #100-15433

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b1  
b7c  
b7c

 c

In view of the fact that RICHARD WRIGHT is reported to reside in New York City and inasmuch as there is no further investigation to be conducted with regard to him in Washington, D. C., the New York City office is being designated office of origin herein and this case is being considered referred upon completion to that office.

- REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 204

100-15433

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, N. Y.**

NY FILE NO. **100-41674** ED

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, N. Y.</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>7/8/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>5/24; 6/1-3/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>INTERNAL SECURITY - C</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

**KEY FIGURE**

Subject presently resides 89 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Registered with SS LDB #178; classified 4F, 1/31/44.

[REDACTED]

AGENCY  
REC'D  
REF. FORM  
[initials]

**REFERENCE:**

Bureau File No. 100-157464.  
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
New York City.

dated 5/28/43 at [REDACTED]

**DETAILS:**

Although it is noted that referenced report of Special Agent [REDACTED] was a Closing Report, in view of the fact that Subject is considered a key figure in Communist activities in the New York Field Division, this case was reopened and the activities of Subject have been followed.

[REDACTED]

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 - Bureau 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, D of I, ZSC 3 - New York		<div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">100-157464-9</div> <div style="text-align: center;">JUL 10 1944</div> <div style="text-align: center;">ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 8-25-85 BY [initials]</div>
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WRIGHT:R  
205

NY 100-41674

[REDACTED]

b7D

[REDACTED]

b2  
b7D

[REDACTED]

b7D

It has been ascertained that the Subject presently resides at 89 Lefferts Place, Apartment C23, Brooklyn 16, New York. Inquiry in the neighborhood of his former residence, Columbia Heights, at 7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York, produced no information of value to this investigation.

[REDACTED]

b2  
b7D

As previously reported, Subject is registered with Selective Service Local Draft Board No. 178 and has Order No. 2025. On June 1st, 1944, Agent interviewed [REDACTED] who advised that Subject had been classified 4-F on January 31, 1944. His rejection by the armed forces on January 15, 1944 had been made with the noted reason: "psychoneurosis, severe, psychiatric rejection; referred to Local Board for further psychiatric and social investigation".

b7D

[REDACTED]

b7D

NY 100-41674

[REDACTED] b7c b7D

It appeared from Subject's contacts with his Local Board that his interest in the problem of the Negro has become almost an obsession and it was said that he apparently overlooks the fact that his own rise to success refutes many of his own statements regarding the impossibility of the Negro's improving his personal position. b7

[REDACTED]

From all the information concerning Subject in publications and according to information from Informants in the New York Office, Subject is continuing his activities as a writer. In addition to his better known books he has also been engaged in the writing of skits and stories, most of which concern the Negro. The publicity which has been received by Subject WRIGHT is typified by the rather lengthy review of his life appearing in the volume "Current Biography, 1940" published by the H. W. Wilson Company. This volume states that RICHARD WRIGHT, Author, was born September 4, 1908 and his present address is care of HARPER & BROTHERS, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City. It refers to him as a brilliant young Negro writer whose collection of short stories "Uncle Tom's Children" won a \$500 prize competition in 1938 and whose book "Native Son" was the March, 1940 selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Much of the article contains a review of the character and theme of that book.

✓  
JRM  
JRM

The life of RICHARD WRIGHT, beginning with his birth, September 4, 1908, on a plantation 25 miles from Natchez, Mississippi, is summarized, as follows:



His father, NATHAN WRIGHT, was a mill worker and his mother, ELLEN WRIGHT, a country school teacher. The family was continually on the move so his education was very much neglected. When his mother was stricken with paralysis during the first world war, the Subject was sent to an uncle's house to live. WRIGHT is quoted as having stated that he did so much fighting, lying and school-cutting that he was sent back to his grandmother who predicted that he would end on the gallows. He was put in a 7th Day Adventist

NY 103-41674

School, taught by his aunt. At 15 he left home and went to Memphis and got a job as porter and messenger. During the subsequent years he worked his way all over the country working at any kind of job from ditch-digging to clerking in a post office. He drifted to Chicago where he had heard Negroes stood a better chance of getting jobs. He was a clerk for a while and in 1933 had a taste of politics. The review then quotes what is purportedly the Subject's own statement:

"I became an assistant precinct captain in the Republican Primary Election", he said, "I was promised a job. I didn't get it. Next time I became an assistant precinct captain for the Democrats and was promised a job, which I didn't get. So then I became a Red. Now I am what the papers refer to as a card-carrying Communist."

In 1935, WRIGHT was on the FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT in Chicago and had sold paper articles and some stories to the magazines. He came to New York in 1937 where he again got on the WRITERS' PROJECT. He wrote an essay on Harlem in the "New York Panorama". He also did some work on the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses". In 1939, WRIGHT reportedly got a Guggenheim fellowship which enabled him to quit the Project and complete his novel "Native Son". He lived for some months during 1940 in Mexico but returned to the United States in November of 1940.



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WRIGHT, R. 209

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NY 100-41674

UNDEVELOPED LEADS

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

At New York, N. Y. - Will follow and report  
activities of Subject.





**Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO  
FILE NO. **100-41674**

**b7c**

June 23, 1944

Director, FBI

RE: **RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C**

Dear Sir:

It is recommended that a Security Index card be prepared relative to the individual named below:

Name: **RICHARD WRIGHT**  
Aliases:

Residence Address: **89 Lefferts Place, Apartment C-23  
Brooklyn 16, New York**

Business Address: **None**

☒ Native Born      ☐ Alien      ☐ Naturalized  
  
☒ Communist      ☐ German      ☐ Miscellaneous  
  
☐ Fascist (Italian)      ☐ Japanese      ☐

Date of Birth Sept. 4, 1908  
Place of Birth Natchez, Mississippi  
Entered U. S. \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
Naturalized (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
Naturalized (place and Court) \_\_\_\_\_

Very truly yours,

*E. E. Conroy*  
E. E. CONROY  
SAC

**100-157464**

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-1/bee

RECORDED

28 JUN 29 1944

WRIGHT, RICHARD  
211

3-

NY 100-41674

IDENTITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT

In the report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
dated July 8, 1944 at New York, N. Y., the Confidential Informant is as  
follows:

[REDACTED]

A temporary informant symbol is used to further  
conceal the identity of this Informant. [REDACTED]

b7c

b2, b7

He was  
followed by Fox  
in New York;  
possibly  
told

SAC-NYC  
8-4-44

b7C

JUL 25 1944

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

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Mr. Tolson  
Mr. E. A. Tamm  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Coffey  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Ladd  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Mohr  
Mr. Carson  
Mr. Hendon  
Mr. Jones  
Mr. Quinn  
Mr. Nease

WASH FROM NEW YORK 2 28 1-14P

DIRECTOR URGENT

GAIN. RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT, IS-C. FOR THE BUREAU INFO ARTICLE  
TODAYS NY HERALD TRIBUNE ENTITLED "NEGRO AUTHOR CRITICIZES REDS AS IN  
TOLERANT", STATES THAT RICHARD WRIGHT, AUTHOR OF "NATIVE SON" IN DIS-  
CUSSING HIS OWN BREAK WITH COMMUNIST PARTY SAYS PARTY FEARS NEW IDEAS  
AND THAT COMMUNIST POSITION ON AMERICAN NEGRO HAS UNDERGONE A "DISTIN-  
GUISHED AND LAMENTABLE REGRESSION" IN RECENT YEARS. WRIGHT WAS FURTHER CRE-  
DITED WITH DESCRIBING COMMUNISTS AS "NARROW MINDED, BIGOTED, INTOLERANT  
AND FRIGHTENED OF NEW IDEAS WHICH DONT FIT INTO THEIR OWN." THE HER-  
ALD TRIBUNE FURTHER STATES THAT MR WRIGHTS REMARKS WERE PROMPTED BY QUES-  
TIONS GROWING OUT OF AN ARTICLE WHICH HE HAS WRITTEN FOR THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY  
FOR AUGUST UNDER THE TITLE OF "I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST." THE TRIBUNE  
FURTHER STATES THAT IN THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY ARTICLE THE AUTHOR OF NA-  
TIVE SON DISCUSSES HIS EARLIEST EXPERIENCES AS A CP MEMBER IN CHICAGO TALK-  
ING ON THE PROBLEMS HE FACED IN TRYING TO PRESENT HIS OWN IDEAS TO THE  
PARTY. FURTHERMORE THE AUGUST ATLANTIC MONTHLY DESCRIBES THE ARTICLE  
AS THE FIRST OF TWO INSTALLMENTS AND MR WRIGHT ADVISED THE TRIBUNE RE-  
PRESENTATIVE YESTERDAY THAT HE WOULD NOT DISCUSS THE SPECIFIC DETAILS

COPIES DESTROYED

WRIGHT, R  
213

23 AUG 8 1944  
e. e. - 2

NY2 PAGE 2

OF THE CHICAGO BREAK WITH THE COMMUNISTS BECAUSE THESE WILL BE COVERED  
IN THE SECOND MAGAZINE ARTICLE. WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED THE TRIBUNE  
THAT HIS CP MEMBERSHIP COVERED THE PERIOD, ROUGHLY, FROM THE LATTER  
PART OF NINETEEN THIRTYTWO TO NINETEEN FORTY AND THAT HIS EARLY ASSO-  
CIATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN CHICAGO HAS BEEN BROKEN IN NINETEEN  
THIRTYSEVEN WHEN HE WAS EJECTED FROM THE SAME. WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED  
THAT HE WAS ON THE OUTS WITH THE PARTY FROM MAY UNTIL AUGUST THIRTY  
SEVEN AND THAT HE WAS REINSTATED IN NY IN SUCH YEAR AND "MAINTAINED  
A RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE PARTY UNTIL FORTY WHEN HE SAID HE LEFT THE  
SAME. THE TRIBUNE ARTICLE DISCUSSING WRIGHTS COMMENTS ABOUT THE LAME  
TABLE REGRESSION OF THE CP POSITION ON THE AMERICAN NEGRO CREDITED MR.  
WRIGHT WITH STATING "PUBLICLY COMMUNISTS WILL DENY THAT THERE IS ANY  
SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THEIR MILITANCY, BUT PRIVATELY THEY OFFER ANY  
HANDY EXCUSE. THE MILITANCY OF THE NEGRO QUESTION HAS PASSED INTO THE  
HANDS OF RIGHT WING NEGROES. THAT WAS NOT TRUE EIGHT YEARS AGO. MOST  
OF THE BATTLES THEN WERE LED BY COMMUNISTS." THE ARTICLE FURTHER STA-  
TED THAT IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT CAUSED THE CHICAGO RIFT  
BETWEEN HIM AND THE COMMUNISTS WRIGHT HAD STATED "IT WAS AN ACCUMULAT  
OF MANY THINGS - NOT SO MUCH A LEAVING AS AN EJECTION OF A DIFFERENCE  
OF OPINION. I HAD MY WAY OF EXPRESSING MY CONCEPTION OF NEGRO EXPER-  
END PAGE TWO

WRIGHT, R. 214

34

NY2 PAGE THREE

88  
[PR waiver ... FBI now!]  
IENCE IN WRITING. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE OF VALUE TO THEM. THEY HAD  
THEIR IDEAS OF HOW I SHOULD REACT AS A COMMUNIST. THERE WAS AN IRRE  
CONCILABLE GAP BETWEEN OUR ATTITUDES. I DO NOT REGARD THE COMMUNIST  
TODAY AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE." WRIGHT FURTHER  
ADVISED THE TRIBUNE THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE A TERRIBLE LOT TO LEARN  
ABOUT PEOPLE. COMMUNISTS PECULIARLY ARE TOO MUCH THE VICTIMS OF THE  
VERY SOCIETY THEY ARE TRYING TO CHANGE. THIS TOO OFTEN FINDS EXPRES  
IN INTOLERANCE AND NARROWNESS." AT THE PRESENT TIME THE NY OFFICE H  
UNDER CONSIDERATION THE ADVISABILITY OF INTERVIEWING MR WRIGHT.

CONROY

HOLD

WRIGHT, R. 215

then CONSIDER  
Poss. of TURN  
into  
INPIM!

LVO  
100-157464-11

August 4, 1944

SAC - New York City

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

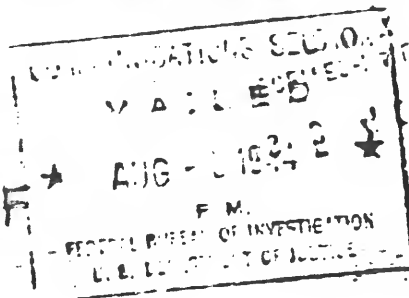
Reference is made to your teletype of July 28, 1944, concerning the reported disaffiliation on the part of the subject with the Communist Political Association. It is noted in your teletype that you have under consideration the advisability of interviewing Wright.

In connection with any interview you might undertake with Wright, it is suggested that you consider obtaining from him specific information concerning exploitation of the Negro race by the Communist Political Association. Furthermore, if the interview actually takes place a previous study should be made of Wright's articles and particularly pertinent comments he makes with regard to the Communist Political Association.

Any interview with Wright must, of course, be most discreet, particularly in light of his reported comments in which he laments the "regression" of the Communist Political Association's position with respect to the American Negro. From a review of the teletype you submitted in this regard, it would seem that Wright does not think the Communist Political Association revolutionary enough at the present time with respect to the advancement of the Negro. This should be considered seriously prior to any action on your part.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/ke



Tolson  
E. A. Tamm  
Clegg  
Glavin  
Ladd  
Nichols  
Rosen  
Tracy  
Acers  
Carson  
Egan  
Gurnea  
Harbo  
Mohr  
Quinn  
Nease  
Gandy

78 SEP 16 1944

RECEIVED HEADQUARTERS  
AUG 5 11 14 AM '44



FILE

To Tell the Truth

# Mr. Wright Didn't Discover It

By Robert Minor

*child*

IN the half-dozen years that Richard Wright was a member of the Communist Party he did not discover that the Communists have no concern whatever with persuading people to be loyal to the Communist organization per se. He sat in meetings for years, and did not discover that the only thing required is that you be loyal to the people's cause. If you are that, then loyalty to the Communist organization will take care of itself.



Wright has a piece in the Atlantic Monthly, in which, whether inadvertently or not, he takes a position on far bigger questions than whether a person likes Communists.

Within the past few years, and faster in recent months, the Negro people have shaped in final form their answers to the national question for the Negro of the United States: That this is their country as well as anyone else's, and that they will have their equal place in it and will fight knock-down-and-drag-out for that equal place, and will win, and those who oppose it will go the way of Martin and Joe and Cotton Ed and Vierck and Dilling and Goebbels.

RICHARD WRIGHT forgot that this fight is on, and with his head stuck into his typewriter he wrote:

"Could a Negro ever live half-way like a human being in this goddamn country?"

That was all the editor needed to have Richard Wright's signature to, in the main; but Wright kept on and said what logically goes with it—because the big, all absorbing, worldwide fight in this war keeps pushing us along. He wrote:

"Then . . . a Jewish chap . . . He introduced me to a Jewish boy . . . (again) to a Jewish boy . . . Jewish chap . . . a short, friendly, black-haired, well-read fellow . . ."

like: "Der Jude mit haengender Unterlippe and Glotz Augen."

Throughout our country, as we all know, there are desperate efforts to accentuate the "racial" divisions in every possible complexity. "Negro against Jew," is the Gerald Smith way of getting Negro support for an anti-Negro movement; since anti-Semitism is only a form of white chauvinism. And Negro against trade unions, purely as an aid to the old villainess of trade-union exclusiveness against the Negro. The first demand on a man who is to remain in the Communist movement is that he be a democrat—in the broad, nonparty sense of the word—a republican in the great long-time historical meaning. And even Richard Wright's remarkably talented book, *Native Son*, had as its weakest side, as Ben Davis pointed out at the time, a certain lack of sense of the vast democratic character of the Negro's struggle of the ages. Now the greatest "national" struggle of all time is raging to its fiery climax in which the victory lies with all peoples seeking freedom. And Mr. Wright forgot that certain editorial people are glad to get anything in election time that seems to line up talented people on the untalented side of the enormous struggle.

The extermination of the Jim Crow system is going to be realized because this is not a "god-damn country." History has advanced; the day has dawned when the mass of Negro workers is entering the trade unions, and the trade unions are beginning to fight for their rights; voters of the biggest city of the world, composed of an alliance of demo-

cratic-willed white and Negro people, elect a Negro to represent them in the City Council on a platform that includes abolition of the Jim Crow system, and will elect to the United States Congress another great Negro leader—all a very modest beginning, only a bridgehead for a fight; but the people have decided. Mr. Richard Wright lends his name to the other opinion.

CAN we do without Richard Wright? Yes, a great movement of the people can do without any individual. The movement goes on, and rises, even when the individual we once loved pulls himself down. Didn't many get discouraged and quit before the great Scottsboro campaign in the 1930's; and didn't thousands of others then come with vision in their eyes for every individual who, with faded eyes, pulled himself down?

One who came in 1932 in the height of the surging movement of the people stirred by the Scottsboro struggle, was a fine young man, living in that Hoover day as a part-time street-sweeper in Chicago, one of those many sons of the people in whom the spark of genius needs but to be fanned by millions of brothers in a common cause, Richard Wright.

Is he gone, now? Others will come; more than you can count; and firmer; more able to reject those who say we will not succeed in living all as human beings "in this goddamn country," and—who translates into our political speech: "Der Jude mit haengender Unterlippe. . ."

Wright says, "I lay in bed thinking, I've got to go it alone. . . You are not alone, Mr. Wright. You are in bad company."

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY 608 BDD/LL

This is a clipping from  
page 6 of the  
DAILY WORKER  
Date 8-15-44  
Clipped at the Seat of  
Government.

VCO-157461-A  
NOT RECORDED  
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EX-50

AT

WRIGHT, R.  
218

b7c

New York 7, New York

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100-4931

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL  
August 8, 1944.

Director, FBI

Re: COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

Dear Sir:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

b1  
b2  
b7C  
b7D

Very truly yours,

E. E. CONROY  
SAC

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

Encls. (4)

cc. NY file #100-41674

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF class  
DATE 10-21-81 ans

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81

100-1-1-1  
AUG 28 1944  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
INITIALS ON-ORIGIN

WRIGHT, R. 217

12

8-25-81

38



**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, New York**

DEC  
100-41674

September 14, 1943

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)  
SECURITY MATTER

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Acers	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Mr. Gandy	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] received by this office on September 10, 1943, concerning RICHARD WRIGHT the Colored novelist who is being considered a key figure in the New York Field Division.

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

Very truly yours,

*E. E. Conroy*  
E. E. CONROY

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S)  
DATE 6-9-77

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Enclosure  
copy for 65-12830



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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-1

RECORDED  
&  
INDEXED

100-157464-7  
SEP 17 1943

161  
100-157464-7  
RECORDED COPY

Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, New York

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....
Files	.....

September 14, 1943

DEC  
100-41674

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)  
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [redacted] received at this office on September 10, 1943 concerning [redacted] RICHARD WRIGHT, the famed colored novelist who is considered a key figure in this office.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) 10-9-43

Very truly yours,

COPIES DESTROYED 6-9-77

E. E. CONROY  
SAC

153 AUG 20 1960



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copy for N.Y. 65-12830

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BT/SLK

WRIGHT, 54 OCT 14 1943  
R. 220

100-157461-6

SEP 17 1943

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, New York**

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Acers	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Mr. Landy	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

September 14, 1943

DEC  
100-41674

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)  
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] received by this office on September 10, 1943, concerning RICHARD WRIGHT the Colored novelist who is being considered a key figure in the New York Field Division.

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

Very truly yours,

E. E. CONROY

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) 2046  
DATE 6-9-77

Enclosure,  
copy for 65-12830



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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-1

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INDEXED

100-157464-7  
SEP 17 1943

WRIGHT, R  
219

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XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) \_\_\_\_\_, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); \_\_\_\_\_ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ For your information: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:  
100-157464-4 enclosure

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 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X  
 X FOR THIS PAGE X  
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WRIGHT, E. 219

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

NY FILE NO. 100-41674

JK

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK CITY</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>5/28/43</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>2/17, 3/1, 4/10; 5/6, 7/43</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] b7c</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>CUSTODIAL DETENTION - C SEDITION</b>

## SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

RICHARD WRIGHT, popular negro writer and former reporter on Daily Worker, according to an article in Daily Worker on 4/13/41 by RALPH WARNER, is a Communist. Other articles in the Worker indicate WRIGHT's Communist tendencies. He himself in so many words admits his affiliation.

**[REDACTED]** Selective Service classification 3- A.

- C -

## REFERENCE:

Bureau file 100-157464.

Report of Special Agent **[REDACTED]** dated February 9, 1943 at New York City.

## DETAILS:

### AT NEW YORK.

Inasmuch as a review of RICHARD WRIGHT's writings indicate he is at least a fellow traveller if not a member of the Communist Party, additional inquiry has been made and is being set out below.

With reference to the reference report where certain sections of WRIGHT's novel "Twelve Million Black Voices"

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <b>E. E. Conroy</b>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT		15 MAY 31 1943	RECORDED INDEXED EX - 32
5 - Bureau 1 - Capt. R. C. MacFall, ONI 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, G-2 3 - New York.		<b>[REDACTED]</b> <b>b7c</b>	

WRIGHT, R. 220

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DATE 1-26-81 BY SP-1 BTJ/lhe

NY file  
100-41674

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were set out as possibly falling within the violation of the sedition statute, a brief review of this book does not indicate that any other portion of the novel is of an sedition nature.

"Twelve Million Black Voices" is a fictitious story of the social conditions of the Negro in the United States from the first slave days to the present in which he discusses the progress of the Negro.

WRIGHT was also the author of the popular novel "Native Son" and when questioned by writers and critics why he created such a character as "Bigger", he explained same in an article which was published in "The Saturday Review" of June 1, 1940, page 18. He discussed pro and con what prompted him to write such a novel and to create such a character as "Bigger" from which, among other things, is taken the following excerpt:

"Another thought kept me from writing. What would my own white and black comrades in the Communist Party say."

From such a published statement, one would assume WRIGHT to be a member of the Party or at least a fellow traveller.

The American-Journal, New York daily newspaper of February 15, 1943 states that RICHARD WRIGHT was a former reporter on the Daily Worker. WRIGHT's picture appears in the "Negroes and the War", published and distributed by the Office of War Information.

The files of the New York office also reflect that RICHARD WRIGHT's name appears on the "Committee to Free Earl Browder", which list was published in the People's Voice, a New York Negro weekly newspaper issued March 21, 1942.

[redacted] advised that on March 6, 1942 WRIGHT's name appeared on the "American Committee to Save Refugees," and on September 18, 1942 was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers, advocating a second front in Europe.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

WRIGHT, R. 221



NY file  
100-41674

[REDACTED] b7D  
[REDACTED] b2  
[REDACTED] b7D

It is noted that WRIGHT's name appeared frequently in the Daily Worker during 1941 and 1942. In an issue dated February 25, 1941, page 4, column 1, it is noted that RICHARD WRIGHT was listed along with EARL BROWDER, BEN GOLD and JOE NORTH as one of the speakers at which time the Daily Worker celebrated MIKE GOLD's 25th anniversary, in the labor movement.

In an issue dated February 28, 1941 WRIGHT was listed as one of the writers who would greet THEODORE DREISER at a testimonial luncheon attended March 1, 1941 at the Commodore Hotel under the auspices of the American Council on Soviet Relations. Others to be present were JESSICA SMITH, editor of "Soviet Russia Today", CLIFFORD ODETS, Dr. JOHN A. KINGSBURY and others.

In an issue of March 19, 1941, page 5, column 7, WRIGHT greeted WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, National Chairman of the Communist Party on his 60th Birthday.

In an issue dated March 22, 1941 WRIGHT along with RUTH McKENNEY, was reported to have accepted to serve on the Board of Honorary Chairmen of the May Day Committee.

In an issue of April 5, 1941, page 7, column 2, RICHARD WRIGHT's name appeared with other writers in what was known as the "Call to the 4th Congress of the League of America" to be held in New York City on June 6 and 8, 1941 to discuss how best writers can resist the trend toward war, what to do to restore the WPA and what to do in defense of culture.

In an issue dated April 13, 1941, the Sunday Worker, page 7, column 1, RALPH WARNER discussed the play "Native Son" and among other things admits that "Max", one of the characters in the play is symbolic of a Communist. "However, that nowhere in the play is he called a Communist but he is clearly a sympathizer." WARNER states however, that RICHARD WRIGHT is a Communist and the conception of Max and of his entire play is.

NY file  
100-41674

In an issue of April 21, 1941, page 1, there is an editorial which speaks about WRIGHT's stirring condemnation of the imprisonment of EARL BROWDER and of a long forward by JAMES W. FORD contained in WRIGHT's "Bright the Morning Star", a short story in pamphlet form printed by the International Publishers. FORD highly endorsed WRIGHT and the article also pertains to a part of a letter to the International Publishers by WRIGHT in which he says he wants no royalty for this work and those that are received are to accrue to the "Earl Browder Defense Fund."

In an issue dated June 9, 1941, page 1, WRIGHT's name appears among those of the Writers Congress who adopted a firm anti-war program.

In an issue dated July 24, 1941, page 7, column 3, it is noted that WRIGHT's name appears among the American writers who pledged full support to Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

A change of attitude of RICHARD WRIGHT and other writers is pointed out in that in early June they adopted a firm anti-war program and in July they advocated full support to the Soviet Union. Further, that Germany declared war on Russia on June 22, 1941.

In an issue dated August 18, 1941 WRIGHT appears on the Citizen's Committee to Free Earl Browder and in an issue dated August 11, 1941, page 9, WRIGHT states that HARRY BRIDGES is a friend of America and has become a symbol in America and that those who fight against him are enemies of America.

In an issue dated October 22, 1941, page 1, paragraph 1, WRIGHT's name appears as one of the members of a group of citizens calling for a release of EARL BROWDER.

On November 19, 1941, page 3, in the Sunday Worker, RICHARD WRIGHT was declared winner of the Spingarn medal for the writing of "Native Son." Also in this issue WRIGHT along with A. W. BERRY, Secretary of the Communist Party, Reverend ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, Jr., and HORACE MARSHALL, Vice-President of the National Negro Congress, protested against police brutality and general economic conditions existent in Harlem.

In an issue dated February 13, 1942, page 7, column 4, a letter of WRIGHT's was published dealing with the controversy on music which letter is dated February 10, 1942 and begins as follows:

"Dear Comrade Sender Garlin:"

WRIGHT, R. 223



NY file  
100-41674

things states that he would like to see letters from the public on "how can recruitment of negroes to the Communist Party be increased." This letter also stated that "The Communist Party is the only political party in America vitally concerned about culture and its problems."

It is also noted that in JAMES W. FORD's book "The Negro and the Democratic Front", on page 193, FORD states that he wants to "express publically the high appreciation of our Negro comrades and Negro people for the splendid contributions of RICHARD WRIGHT, LANGSTON HUGHES and other artists and musicians of our people."

On October 14, 1942 [REDACTED] advised that RICHARD WRIGHT, a former known Communist Party member, had split with the Party because of his dissatisfaction with the way the Party handled the Negro question.

[REDACTED]  
327 Lafayette Street, Brooklyn, furnished the following information as reflected in the files of that board concerning WRIGHT.

He advised that WRIGHT's questionnaire was returned May 9, 1941 at which time WRIGHT resided at 473 West 104th Street, New York City. However, he presently resides at 7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York. On May 28, 1941 WRIGHT was placed in 3-A classification because of collateral dependents. On July 1, 1942 his collateral dependency was removed and he was placed in classification 1-A.

On July 6, 1942 he was about to be inducted into the Army and he asked for a 90 day extension, which was granted. On November 2, 1942 a continuation of this extension was granted. On November 16, 1942 he was placed in 3-A in order to permit him an opportunity to take Volunteer Candidate Training, but was subsequently rejected.

The questionnaire reflects that WRIGHT was born September 4, 1908 at Natches, Mississippi. His education was given as eight years of elementary school. He states his employment experience is that of a novelist, playwright, poet and newspaper reporter. He did not set forth his place of employment but advised that he was engaged as a writer of political and labor news from 1937 to 1938. This might possibly be the period that he was a reporter for the Daily Worker.

WRIGHT furnished a list of his writings to the Local Board. It was noted that "Uncle Tom's Children" according to WRIGHT was written by him and was later translated into Russian by the U.S.S.R. and issued in international literature.

WRIGHT, R. 224

NY file  
100-41674

His questionnaire further reflects that he was married March 10, 1941 at Coytesville, New Jersey. His dependents are given as that of his mother ELLA WRIGHT. [REDACTED] NATHAN WRIGHT, father, [REDACTED] LEON WRIGHT, brother, [REDACTED] and CLEO WRIGHT, sister-in-law at the same address. b7c

WRIGHT listed as property one house valued at \$3,000. [REDACTED] WRIGHT is divorced from his first wife, because on June 7, 1942 he listed his dependents as ELLEN WRIGHT, wife, age 29 and JULIA WRIGHT, two months, daughter, born April 12, 1942.

[REDACTED] advised that the file further reflects a letter from the Office of War Information, New York City, in which was transmitted a program as prepared for them by RICHARD WRIGHT. The records further reflected that WRIGHT has lived at the following addresses: b7c

467 Waverly Avenue, Brooklyn. (1940)

473 West 140th Street, New York City. (May 1941)

11 Revere Place, Brooklyn. (July 7, 1941)

7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn. (Present address) b7c

[REDACTED] advised that the Board's association with RICHARD WRIGHT had been very pleasant and that he had been very cooperative and prompt in his transactions with them.

A description of WRIGHT as furnished by [REDACTED] is as follows:

Age	34
Born	September 4, 1908, Natchez, Mississippi
Height	5'7"
Weight	158 pounds
Build	Medium
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Black
Complexion	Dark
Race	Negro
Occupation	Writer
Marital status	Married
Criminal record	None
Scars or marks	None
Citizenship	American
Marital status	Married

No further investigation is being conducted and this

WRIGHT, R. 225

NY file  
1674

IDENTITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS:

[REDACTED] mentioned in the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] dated May 28, 1943 at New York City, is a flimsy report from G-2, Governor's Island, and is being made an informant in view of the fact that the Bureau has expressed a desire not to have them mentioned in reports.

b2  
b7f  
b7c

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] who is being made an Informant in accordance with a Bureau request.

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, N.Y.**

EMC  
100-41674

b7c

March 3, 1943

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY  
SEDITION

Dear Sir:

In reference to Bureau letter of January 20, 1943, (Bureau file 100-157464) requesting the status of the above entitled matter, this is to advise this case has been reassigned and placed in line for immediate investigation.

Very truly yours,

*E. E. Conroy*  
E. E. CONROY  
SAC

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-1 JLB

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153 AUG 10 1960



WRIGHT, R.

227

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157464  
MAR 5 1943

b7c

COPY

COPY

Los Angeles, Calif.  
June 18 - 45

Dear Sir:

Richard Wright the negro who wrote black boy and Native Son books are doing no good and a lot of harm they are causing disunity and spreading race hatred and if you people dont want America tore up the same as Germany you had better put a stop to sutch people as that poor old ass of a Southern Senator with his back to Africa move ment and sutch old fools as that poor crazy old Richard Wright. We colored people are good natured all we want is justice a good job with good pay for work well done. Every time we turn around some one is complaining nagging constantly critercising every thing we do. Richard Wright seem to be unhappy in America so we wish to God he would leave and go some place else for he is geting on our nerves. I and all the other colored people know that ninty percent of the trash that he puts in his books are lies, but if people in Germany should get a hold of Black boy I'm awfull afraid Uncle Sam's face is going to be red for you cant rule a German if you cant rule America. And the lies that poor sick braned fool Richard Wright put in his books sure dont do America any good in the foreigner's eye sight. We colored people want Richard Wright's books baned if he cant write a story without trying to agitate race trouble we want him to pick himself a new vocation. Just get a copy of his books and go through them. We dont see why he isn't in the Army anyway. If he went to India or some other place and saw how horrible those people live then he would see how far advanced we are. After all we colored people are doing the best we can if you would get a copy of the negro hand book for 1942 you would see just how well we are doing. We are only a small race of people. We colored people are very discouraged and that is the reason sixty million little bity Japanese can fight all most two billion people without a allie and hole out so long. Because that Billion colored people are on the point of giving up. After all this is not our war and if we win we loose So I suppose there is nothing to do but just say to hell with the hole bloody mess.

This is from that poor old fools book Black boy this is enough to provoke the devil.

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 11/11/00 BY 1045

WRIGHT, R.

229

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BT/bca

Los Angeles CA

July 1945

We are writing you people in  
hope you will be able to have books  
like black boy and also native son  
by the negre Richard Wright <sup>RICHARD WRIGHT</sup>  
tamed as he is spreading race hatred  
and causing disunity. If you  
will look through the many books  
you will see how he rant and  
rave like a mad man. It is terrible  
and also he use to much filthy  
expressions the white writers don't  
do that. <sup>RECORDED 100-157464-29</sup>  
<sup>INDEXED</sup> why should they do for  
the sake of unity please have his  
books tamed. they are doing no good.





**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**

New York 7, New York



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO  
FILE NO. 100-41574

WHR

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C  
Bureau File 100-157464

May 18, 1945

Dear Sir:

The copy of the Security Index Card maintained at this field office relative to the above-named individual has been revised and is now captioned as follows:

WRIGHT, RICHARD NATHANIEL  
NEGRO

NATIVE BORN

COMMUNIST

Apartment C-23  
89 Lefferts Place  
Brooklyn, New York (Res.)

Free-lance writer at residence (Bus.)

Born Sept. 4-08  
Natchez, Miss.

REFER TO BUREAU LETTER DATED MAY 7, 1945 IN INSTANT CASE. NEW YORK CARD HAS BEEN MADE UP.

In accordance with Bureau instructions, a white 5" x 8" card, captioned as above, has been prepared and filed in the Confidential Security Index Card File of this office. Appropriate disposition has been made of the card previously maintained in the Card File, in accordance with existing instructions. It is suggested that the original Security Index Card maintained at the Seat of Government be revised in agreement with the caption above set out.

Very truly yours,

E. E. CONROY  
Special Agent in Charge

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY 8005/lee

WHEN THE ACTION REQUIRED HEREBY HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THIS LETTER

WRIGHT, R. 231

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

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Acad. House

WRIGHT, R. 232



## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

100-41674

:MicG

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: February 26, 1945

FROM: SAC, New York City

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER C  
(Bureau file 100-157464)

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] made at New York City on September 5, 1944 entitled RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT; INTERNAL SECURITY C. This report sets out a lead for the New York Field Division, "After careful consideration interview the subject WRIGHT concerning his association with the Communist Party."

After very careful consideration it is felt inadvisable to interview WRIGHT particularly as the basis of his break with the Communist Party, as appears from his recent articles in the Atlantic Monthly Magazine, is the Communist Party's failure to be sufficiently radical and militant with respect to the advancement of the Negro. These articles also indicate a complete disapproval by WRIGHT of the American way of life.

Also considered in arriving at the decision not to interview WRIGHT are the facts that he has been classified 4-F due to severe psycho-neurosis and his contacts with his Local Selective Service Board have reflected his interest in the problem of the Negro to be almost an obsession.

In view of the subject's public break with the Communist Party, he is no longer being carried as a Key Figure by the New York Field Division, however, a Security Index Card on him is being maintained by the New York Office due to his militant attitude toward the Negro problem.

The only information secured by this office concerning WRIGHT that has not already been reported is that he was listed as a member of the National Committee of the International Labor Defense in a pamphlet entitled, "Equal Justice and Democracy in the Service of Victory," published by the International Labor Defense in September 1944. WRIGHT'S residence address has been verified as Apt. C-23, 89 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, New York, as of February 15, 1945.

This investigation is being placed in a closed status by the New York Field Division. In the event further investigation becomes necessary, it will be reported under a Security Matter C character.

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WRIGHT, R.  
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# New Times

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IN **BLACK BOY**, Richard Wright has written a furious and terrifying story of the impact of the Jimcrow system upon human beings in the deep South. The result is a picture which challenges America.

There may be exaggerations in the book. Many of the incidents may be highly fictional, and never really happened to Wright. But what difference does that make if they happened to some other young Negro. The point is that they should not happen to any Negro and the conditions which corrode the Negro family must be eliminated. For they victimize not only the Negro citizen; they suffocate the poor whites to a more or less degree, and retard the development of the whole South.



It does no good to run away from this essential significance of the book for the purpose of grappling with the secondary aspects, some of which are contained in the book, and others of which surround the author's views and his writing of the book. It is of supreme importance that this main picture of the life and death of the Negro under the reign of white supremacy should hit America with full force. For it concerns America. Any attempt to bypass this over-all picture will lessen its force and thereby lead to an underestimation of its starkness and blunt the sharp need for correctives. When this main picture is changed in its principal outlines, the derivative secondary aspects will disappear. But until it does, naturally there are going to be all kinds of confusion, badly

by Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.

focused perspectives, and misleading ambiguities and conclusions—many of which mar **Black Boy**.

THE book is intensely subjective. In fact, it is limited by its subjectiveness. But people are not born subjective, and it is clear that a young Negro who has to run the gauntlet of every type of oppression—just short of lynching—has subjectiveness forced into his marrow. This heavy pressure pushes him to view the world in which he lives entirely through glasses colored by his own personal suffering from national oppression, which suffering in one form or another he meets every day. Those who complain of that intense subjectivity are forever stopped from doing so, unless they realize what brought it about, and also help to eradicate the diseased soil from which it grows.

It is important, however, that this subjectiveness be overcome. It can be done and is being done since there are new trends and factors which make the overcoming possible. It is also necessary to overcome it, lest one fall into the trap of frustration and defeatism which the white supremacy forces have set. **Black Boy** says some wholly unacceptable things about the Negro's capacity for genuine emotion. Here the author's subjectivity has overcome reality. For the truly remarkable achievement of the Negro is that he has made such singular contributions to America—culturally and musically and in all other fields—despite the system of national oppression which tends to thwart his every effort. The point is: Will Wright himself be able

## Some Impressions Of **Black Boy**

to overcome this limitation of subjectivity imposed upon him in order that he may see clearly, and participate with, the forces which would destroy the myth of white supremacy. Inasmuch as Wright has attained literary prominence, and some circles have thrust upon him the mantle of spokesman for his people, he above all must maintain a clear head.

THERE is no doubt that Wright wields a brilliant and stormy pen. Few story tellers are his equal. But is this sufficient when there are brilliant writers on both sides of the barricades. It is vitally important that the artist who reflects and the artist who sees the way out should be one and the same person. For both these factors exist in the objective real world, outside one's self. Jimcrow is here, yet Jimcrow is also being driven defeated from the scene. Life is not static. One has to see both to be realistic, and to shape the future.

Wright does not see the positive, constructive side, and therefore the mirror of his pen does not give a complete picture. He omits the biggest new thing which is happening in the world today—the main progressive currents from which even the South is not immune. Apparently he is isolated from these developments—and far removed from the people. Such isolationism can lead to stagnation—to form without content. It is pretty difficult to see what happened in 1915 if one is isolated from 1945. While Wright is, of course, not responsible for **Black Boy** conditions, he is, however, responsible for his own voluntary act of withdrawal from the forces which are among the leaders of the fight for a new world. He can blame himself.

INDEXED 100-157114  
NOT RECORDED  
APR 18 1945

This is a clipping from:  
page 9 sec. 1 of  
THE WORKER  
Date 4-1-45  
Clipped at the seat of  
Government

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WRIGHT, R. 234

~~SECRET~~  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
Military Intelligence Service  
Washington

NOV 2 1942

Subject: Letter of Transmittal.  
To: Lt. Col. J. Edgar Hoover  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Department of Justice

The attached communications are forwarded for your information and such action as you consider advisable.

For the Chief, Military Intelligence Service:

*John T. Bissell*  
J. T. BISSELL  
Colonel, General Staff,  
Asst. Executive Officer, M. I. S.

Enclosures:

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ON JAN 6 1988  
BY: CCR USAINSCOMFONO  
AUTH: PHS 1603 DOD 5200.1-E

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*10/11/42*  
*Wright*

WRIGHT, R. 237

100-157464-1

October 10th 1942

Mr. J. Stinson  
Post Office Box  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I beg to call to your attention books by one Richard Wright designed to stir racial dissension in America confining my charges to one entitled "12,000,000 Black Voices". Its entire contents are designed to destroy the morale of an important percent of American citizens under call to the armed forces of the United States; In particular I refer to page 143 in which Japan is held up as the possible saviour of the colored race, this by inference plays directly into the hands of our enemies in arms, therefore constituting a treasonable utterance in time of war.

This publication has had a large circulation among colored people and other enemies within the United States; Responsible for serious violations of law and order in all parts of the Country, especially where there are large colored populations.

Material of this character in the hands of designing persons can lead to many forms of sabotage and result in a general breakdown of morale bound to corrupt the use of national unity so necessary in an all out "win the War" effort by America and her allies.

Two other books by this writer are equally dangerous to national welfare the names of which I will gladly supply upon request from your office.

In addition to the books, this ties in with one of the most dangerous appeals to racial dissension, of alien origin, being used by subversive forces at work in America.

Very truly yours

LEAGUE

OCT 14 1942

RECEIVED

David P. Raza  
215 East 17th Street.

NEW YORK, N.Y.

Edwin P. Raza



# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

NY FILE NO. 100-41674 JMG

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>2-9-43</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>1-2, 3, 5, 11-43</b>	REPORT MADE BY <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 1.2em; display: inline-block;"></div> <b>b7c</b>
TITLE  <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE  <b>INTERNAL SECURITY SEDITION</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

Subject born in Natchez, Mississippi, 1909, and at age of 15 ran away from orphan asylum and then bummed his way throughout the country. Subject employed by WPA from 1-3-38 to 5-17-39. Subject the author of "Native Son", a novel which was later adapted into a play by same name, and this play was included in "The Best Plays of 1940 and 1941". Information regarding subject's book, "Twelve Million Black Voices" set out.

AGENCY FILE NO. 100-41674  
REQ. REC'D 4-2-43  
REP'T FORW. 7-6-43  
BY 104

- C -

**REFERENCE:**

(Bureau File Number 100-157464)  
Bureau Letter to New York dated December 9, 1942.

**DETAILS:**

A review of the indices of the Public Library of New York City, located at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, reflected that the subject's true name is RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT and that he was born in 1909. The indices also reflected that the subject wrote the following books: "Fire and Cloud", "Twelve Million Black Voices", "Native Son", and "Uncle Tom's Children".

Mr. M. B. TOLSON, in the 1939 issue of the "Modern Quarterly", Volume Eleven, Number Five, in reviewing the works of the subject, stated that RICHARD WRIGHT was born "on a broken down plantation near Natchez, Mississippi, a State which leads the Union in illiteracy, Christianity and mobocracy. His family travelled from town to town like grub-worms. His father got tired of his poverty-ravaged household and deserted the family. Paralysis struck his mother down and he entered an orphan asylum but ran off at fifteen. In Memphis he haunted Beale Street and later he bummed his way all over the country, fighting, stealing, lying. He'd reached only the eighth grade in school. Somewhere

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: *E. E. Courtney*  
SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

**COPIES OF THIS REPORT**

- ⑤ - Bureau
- 1 - Capt. R. C. MacFall, ONI
- 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, G-2
- 2 - New York

100-157464-2

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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DATE 1-2-81 BY SP-10

WRIGHT  
239

100-157464 -1

Date: December 8, 1942

To: SAC, New York

From: J. Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY - SEDITION

Transmitted herewith are copies of a communication addressed by [redacted] to the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, at Washington, D. C., under date of October 13, 1942. The Bureau of course received this communication by reference from the Military Intelligence Service. b7C

In view of [redacted] specific allegations as to certain writings of subject, it is desired that your office make inquiry of sources available to you for the purpose of determining whether the book entitled "Twelve Million Black Voices" or other publications of subject are in fact given to the expression of statements having significance under the Sedition Statutes. If possible, you should secure a copy of this publication as well as other writings of subject and review the same for the possible presence of such material.

If your inquiry develops information of an affirmative nature, you should of course cause an investigation to be undertaken as to subject's background, inclinations, and current activities.

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Kramer \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. McGuire \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION  
MAILED 10  
★ DEC 10 1942 P.M.  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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WRIGHT  
R. 240

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b7C

NY 100-41674

along the gutted road it dawned upon him that he needed an education. And then, whether digging ditches or clerking in the post office, he devoured the contents of newspapers and magazines as well as books that came his way."

[REDACTED] advised the writer that the subject had been employed by the WPA on a Federal Writers' Project from January 3, 1938, to May 17, 1939, when he resigned to accept private employment. At this time subject was residing at 809 Saint Nicholas Avenue, New York City.

"The Best Plays of 1940 and 1941" by BURNS MANTLE included the subject's play, "Native Son", which was produced from the subject's novel by the same name.

Mr. BROOKS ATKINSON in the New York Times had the following to say about the subject's play, "Native Son": "In the drama Mr. GREEN and Mr. WRIGHT work in a more objective style. Without the subjective background their defense of Bigger Thomas's ghastly crime in the court scene sounds like generalized pleading. It lacks the stinging enlightenment of the last third of Mr. WRIGHT's novel. But that completes this column's bill of exceptions to the biggest American drama of the season."

The novel, "Twelve Million Black Voices", which was written by the subject, was published by the Viking Press in New York City in October, 1941, and this book is divided into four parts: (1) Our Strange Birth; (2) Inheritors of Slavery; (3) Death on the City Pavements; and (4) Men in the Making. In the foreword, Mr. WRIGHT states "while this novel purports to render a broad picture of the processes of negro life in the United States, intentionally it does not include in its considerations those areas of negro life which comprise the so-called 'talented tenth' or the isolated islands of mulatto leadership which are still to be found in many parts of the South or the growing and influential negro middle class professional and business men of the North who have, for the past twenty years or more, formed a sort of liaison corps between the whites and the blacks".

The reference letter reflected that on Page 143 of the above-mentioned novel, there was material that appeared to be seditious in nature; and for the benefit of the Bureau, the above-mentioned page is being quoted in full:

"There are millions of us and we are moving in all directions. All our lives we have been catapulted into arenas where, had we thought consciously of invading them, we would have hung back. A sense of constant change has stolen silently into our lives and has become operative in our personalities as a law of living.



NY 100-41674

"There are some of us who feel our hurts so deeply that we find it impossible to work with whites; we feel that it is futile to hope or dream in terms of American life. Our distrust is so great that we form intensely racial and nationalistic organizations and advocate the establishment of a separate state, a forty-ninth state, in which we black folk would live.

"There are even today among us groups that forlornly plan a return to Africa."

"There are others of us who feel the need of the protection of a strong nation so keenly that we admire the harsh and imperialistic policies of Japan and ardently hope that the Japanese will assume the leadership of the 'darker races'.

"As our consciousness changes, as we come of age, as we shed our folk swaddling clothes, so run our lives in a hundred directions.

"Today, all of us black folk are not poor. A few of us have money. We make it as the white folk make theirs, but our money-making is restricted to our own people. Many of us black folk have managed to send our children to school, and a few of our children are now professional and business men whose standards of living approximate those of middle-class whites. Some of us own small businesses; others devote their lives to law and medicine.

"But the majority of us still toil on the plantations, work in heavy industry, and labor in the kitchens of the Lords of the Land and the Bosses of the Buildings.

"The general dislocation of life during the depression caused many white workers to learn through chronic privation that they could not protect their standard of living so long as we blacks were excluded from their unions. Many hundreds of thousands of them found that they could not fight successfully for increased wages and union recognition unless we stood shoulder to shoulder with them. As a consequence, many of us have recently become members of steel, automobile, packing and tobacco unions."

The following quotations are found on Page 146 of the same book and is the last page of the novel:

"The differences between black folk and white folk are not blood or color, and the ties that bind us are deeper than those that separate us. The common road of hope which we all have travelled has brought us into a stronger kinship than any words, laws or legal claims."

"What do we black folk want? We want what others have, the right to share in the upward march of American life, the only life we remember or have

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ever known. The Lord of the Land say: 'We will not grant this!' We answer: 'We ask you to grant us nothing. We are winning our heritage though our toll in suffering is great!' The Bosses of the Buildings say: 'Your problem is beyond solution!' We answer: 'Our problem is being solved. We are crossing the line you dared us to cross though we pay in the coin of death!' "

"The seasons of the plantation no longer dictate the lives of many of us; hundreds of thousands of us are moving into the sphere of conscious history."

"We are with the new tide. We stand at the crossroads. We watch each new procession. The hot wires carrying urgent appeals. Print compels us. Voices are speaking. Men are moving! And we shall be with them."

J → A "Noble" THAT  
TAKEN DIRECTLY

- CLOSED -

STATION!  
Hence  
Now!

NY 100241674

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT

Special Agent [REDACTED] as mentioned in the report of  
is [REDACTED] New York, New York, dated February 9, 1943.

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